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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#) [YM](#)

SUBJECT: DFM NOMAN'S REACTION TO IRAQI ELECTION

Classified By: DCM Nabeel Khoury for reasons 1.5 b and d.

11. (C) Summary and Comment. Deputy Foreign Minister Mustafa Noman discussed the results of the Iraqi election with DCM and Pol/Econ Chief on February 1. Noman shared his personal feelings on the election process, calling it a "great success." In previous conversations, Noman had expressed his personal views on violence and the political process in Iraq, carefully drawing a distinction between his opinions and ROYG official policy. Noman confided his support for sticking to the election timetable in the weeks leading up to January 30, saying that to do otherwise would hand a victory to the terrorists. The DFM had tried to convince senior ROYG officials that insurgents in Iraq were not "resistance fighters," but to no avail. President Saleh, who advised visiting General Abi Zaid on January 4 to postpone Iraqi elections, has not made a statement since the polls closed. Official media coverage on the day of the elections focused heavily on a "violence marred election day." End Summary and Comment.

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"A Great Success"  
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12. (C) Noman said he was pleased with the Iraqi elections, pointing to less than anticipated violence and 60 percent participation of the Iraqi people. "Personally," said the DFM, "the elections represent a big step forward," adding that it will be important and interesting to watch what shape the new government takes and at what level Sunnis will participate in the drafting of the new constitution. As the likelihood will be a significant Shia majority, "I don't find it frightening, it's only natural...so what?" DCM pressed Noman for a ROYG demonstration of support for the Iraqi people, suggesting that President Saleh or Foreign Minister Qirbi issue a statement of congratulations. Noman nodded, but gave no indication that an official statement would be forthcoming any time soon.

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Saleh's Pre-Election Statement  
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13. (SBU) Speaking to a crowd in the southern Governorate of al-Bayda on January 30, President Saleh said "We hope the Iraqi people will democratically elect a new leadership" including all ethnic and sectarian groups, adding, a "limp election would be a catastrophe." Saleh has yet to comment further since the polls closed. The official media limited its coverage to photos and headlines focusing on violent incidents around the country January 30. On February 2 government-owned "al-Thawra" daily conceded that the mere fact that elections were held "left hope for the success of attempts to create a common ground" among the Iraqi people. Krajewski